

June 26, 1944 The Finnish Situation

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Summary:

Stalin and Harriman discuss Finland and the strategy for Finnish withdraw from the war.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

- English Transcription
- Scan of Original Document

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Conversation.

Moscow, June 26, 1944

Present: The American Ambassador, Mr. Harriman

Mr. Edward Page, Second Secretary of Embassy

Marshal Stalin

Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar

For Foreign Affairs

Mr. Pavlov, Soviet interpreter

Subject: The Finnish Situation.

After Mr. Johnston had withdrawn from the room, I had an opportunity to bring up with Marshal Stalin the question regarding Finland raised by the Secretary of State in a recent cable (Department's No. 1550, June 24, 10 p.m.) and I asked him whether in his opinion there was anything the President could do which might be helpful in facilitating the Finnish withdrawal from the war. The Marshal stated that he did not believe that any action on our part would be of any value at the present time. He said that the controlling members of the Finnish Government were Fascists, were agents of Hitler, and were under the complete domination of the German Government. There were not interested in the welfare of the Finnish people but only in keeping themselves in power.

The Marshal continued that at the instigation of the Finns, Boheman had approached Madame Kollontai in Stockholm and had stated that the Finnish Government desired to resume peace negotiations and to send representative to Moscow. The Soviet Government had replied that if it received a written statement from the President of Finland or from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Finland was prepared to capitulate, the Soviet Government would receive the representatives and would open peace negotiations. This had happened a week ago and no reply had been received from the Finnish Government.

I said that we had heard from our Charge d'Affaires in Helsinki that there was a possibility of a change in government under Ramsay's leadership. Stalin replied "these are only rumors" and are typical of the policy of deception which the Finnish Government has been carrying on. For example, the Finns are continually deceiving the Swedes who, although honest, unknowingly mislead other people. Marshal Stalin did not appear to place any credence in the report that Ramsay was endeavoring to effect a change in the government; in any event he did not believe that Ramsay would be successful in ousting the "fascist group" which made up the majority of the Finnish Government.

In reply to my further question, Marshal Stalin indicated that he did not feel that assurances either to the Finnish Government or over its head to the people of Finland that the Soviet Government did not intend to swallow up Finland would be of any avail at the present time. At one time in the conversation Stalin stated that it was of course for the President and the United States Government to decide what course of action they wished to take regarding Finland. He added that he did not even believe that a rupture in American-Finnish relations would cause the present Finnish Government to change its position in so far as a Finnish withdrawal from the war was concerned.

In spite of the Marshal's pessimism, I obtained the impression that he would not resent or object to our giving informal indications to the Finns of our understanding of Soviet policy toward Finnish

independence and as reiterated by Marshal Stalin in our last conversation.

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Molotov Conversation re Finnish Situation
June 26, 1944. (1)

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Keskustelu. Moskova, 26.6.1944

Läsnä: USA:n suurlähettiläs Mr. Harriman
Mr. Edward Page, toinen lähetystösihteeri
Marsalkka Stalin
Mr. V. M. Molotov, ulkoasioiden kansankomissaari
Mr. Pavlov, neuvostotulkki

Aihe: Suomen tilanne

Kun herra Johnston oli poistunut huoneesta, minulla oli tilaisuus tuoda esille marsalkka Stalinin kanssa ulkoministerin äskettäisessä sähkössä esittämä Suomea koskeva kysymys (ulkomin. nro 1550, 24. kesäkuuta klo 22.00) ja kysyin häneltä, olisiko hänen mielestään jotakin, mitä presidentti voisi tehdä, mikä voisi olla helpottaa Suomen vetäytymistä sodasta. Marsalkka totesi, että hän ei usko, että millään toimenpiteellä meidän puoleltamme olisi tällä merkitystä tällä hetkellä. Hän sanoi, että Suomen hallituksen määräävässä asemassa olevat jäsenet olivat fasisteja, Hitlerin agenteja ja ovat täysin Saksan hallituksen alaisia. He eivät ole kiinnostuneita Suomen kansan hyvinvoinnista vaan ainoastaan itsensä pitämisestä vallassa.

Marsalkka jatkoi, että suomalaisten aloitteesta Boheman [Ruotsin ulkoministeriön kansliapäällikkö, kabinettssekreterare] oli lähestynyt rouva Kollontaita Tukholmassa ja ilmoittanut, että Suomen hallitus haluaa jatkaa rauhanneuvotteluja ja lähettää edustajan Moskovaan. Neuvostoliiton hallitus on vastannut, että jos se saisi kirjallisen lausunnon Suomen presidentiltä tai ulkoministeriltä siitä, että Suomi olisi valmis antautumaan ehdoitta, Neuvostoliiton hallitus vastaanottaisi edustajat ja aloittaisi rauhanneuvottelut. Tämä oli tapahtunut viikko sitten, eikä Suomen hallitukselta ollut saatu vastausta.

Sanoin, että olimme kuulleet Helsingin asiainhoitajaltamme, että on olemassa mahdollisuus hallituksen vaihtoon Ramsayn johdolla. Stalin vastasi, että "nämä ovat vain huhuja" ja ovat tyypillisiä sille petoksen politiikalle, jota Suomen hallitus jatkaa. Suomalaiset huijaavat jatkuvasti esimerkiksi ruotsalaisia, jotka, vaikka ovatkin rehellisiä, harhauttavat muita ihmisiä. Marsalkka Stalin ei näyttänyt panevan mitään uskottavuutta raporttiin, jonka mukaan Ramsay pyrkii muuttamaan hallitusta; missään tapauksessa hän ei usko, että Ramsay onnistuisi syrjäyttämään "fasistisen ryhmän", joka muodosti Suomen hallituksen enemmistön.

Vastauksena lisäkysymykseeni marsalkka Stalin antoi ymmärtää, että hänestä vakuuttelut Suomen hallitukselle tai sen yli Suomen kansalle siitä, että neuvostohallitus ei aio niellä Suomea, eivät olisi merkityksellisiä tällä hetkellä. Eräessä kohden keskustelua Stalin totesi, että on tietysti presidentin ja Yhdysvaltain hallituksen vallassa päättää, minkälaista toimintatapaa he haluavat noudattaa Suomen suhteen. Hän lisäsi, että hän ei kylläkään usko, että Amerikan ja Suomen välisten suhteiden katkaiseminen saisi Suomen nykyisen hallituksen muuttamaan kantaansa Suomen sodasta vetäytymistä koskien.

Marsalkan pessimismistä huolimatta sain kuvan, että hän ei pahastuisi tai vastustaisi sitä, että annamme suomalaisille epävirallisia näkemyksiä siitä, mikä on meidän ymmärryksemme Neuvostoliiton politiikasta Suomen itsenäisyyteen nähden ja miten marsalkka Stalin toisti sen viime keskustelussamme.